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16.

A VINDICATION OF Dr. *Sherlock's* SERMON CONCERNING *The Danger of Corrupting the Faith by Philosophy.* IN ANSWER TO SOME Socinian Remarks.

By WILLIAM SHERLOCK, D. D. Dean of St. *Paul's*, Master of the *Temple*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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To the Right Honourable

Sir *EDWARD CLARKE*, LORD MAYOR:

And to the Honourable

Court of Aldermen.

My Lord,

I Beg leave to Preſent Your Lordſhip with the Vindication of my Sermon lately Publiſhed by the Order of Your Court, againſt the Cavils, Calumnies, and wilful Miſrepreſentations of a *Socinian* Writer. The Argument is of that great Conſequence that it deſerves to be defended; and this Pamphleteer has ſo rudely reflected upon the Honour and Sincerity of the Court, for their

Order to Print it, that I look'd upon my ſelf under a double Obligation, to Defend ſo Important a Truth, and in that to juſtify Your Lordſhip's Order. I pray God rebuke that perverſe Spirit of Infidelity and Hereſy which is gone abroad in the World, and ſecure the Faith of Chriſtians from all the Arts and Inſinuations of Impoſtors. That God would bleſs Your Lordſhip's Government, and preſerve this Great City from all Temporal and Spiritual Evils, is the hearty Prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's,

Moſt Obedient Servant,

William Sherlock.

A VINDICATION OF Dr. SHERLOCK's Sermon before my LORD MAYOR, &c.

WHEN I receiv'd the threatning and boasting Message from some busy Factors of the *Socinian* Fraternity, what work they would make with my late Sermon before my Lord Mayor, concerning *the Danger of corrupting the Faith by Philosophy*, my greatest Concernment was, how to meet with their Answer, which usually comes last to my hands, and how to bear the Drudgery of reading it; for their Arguments have been spent long since, and that little Wit they had is now degenerated into Railing. That scurrilous Treatment they have lately given to so many Excellent Persons, especially to that Great Man the Bishop of *Worcester*, is a fair Warning to all who dare oppose them, what they must expect: And besides the Experience of their many former Civilities, I had more than ordinary reason to expect it now, they being touch'd in a very sensible part, without any other Defence to make: And this Author has not deceiv'd my Expectations; for upon a

Peruſal of his Remarks, I find nothing of Argument, a very little Wit, and abundance of Railing. His Wit and Railing be to himſelf; but I am ſorry I can find nothing that looks ſo like an Argument, as to adminiſter occaſion for any uſeful Diſcourſe. This there is no help for; if Men will write Books without any Arguments to be anſwered, there is nothing to be done, but only to ſhew that they have offered nothing to the purpoſe, or that needs an Anſwer: And this will be done in a few words; for he has diſputed at large againſt what I never ſaid nor thought, but has not one word againſt any part of the Argument of that Sermon.

His Title-Page pretends a great Zeal for *the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and of the Church of* England, *concerning the Bleſſed Trinity:* Which is as true, as that *Richard Baldwin* printed this Pamphlet, who has publickly diſowned it in Print: But though a *Socinian* Conſcience can digeſt ſuch Godly Cheats, as a piece of Wit and Artifice, yet a Wiſe Man would not venture on them, becauſe Mankind hate to be abuſed, and grow very jealous of Men of Tricks. And yet had we to deal with Modeſt Men, it would be thought a little of the lateſt for a *Socinian* to talk of defending *the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and of the Church of* England, *concerning the Bleſſed Trinity:* For their Cant about *Real and Nominal Trinitarians, and Three Infinite Minds and Spirits,* is too well known to paſs for ſo much as a Jeſt any longer; and till they can defend *the Judgment of* their *Diſintereſſed Perſon* a little better than by ſcorning the Anſwer, which they will never be able to make any other Reply to, it were time for them, could they find any thing elſe to ſay in the room of it, to let that alone. And yet this is what he would bring this preſent Diſpute to, if he knew how: He often flirts at *Three Infinite Minds and Spirits,* though there is no ſuch Expreſſion in the whole Sermon; but ſtill he ſays I intimate this

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in asserting *a Real Trinity*: Now if *Three Infinite Minds and Spirits* be essential to the Notion of *a Real Trinity*, (as his Inference supposes) it is the best Vindication that could possibly be thought of for that Expression: For not to believe *a Real Trinity*, is to deny the Father to be a True and Real Father, and the Son to be a True and Real Son, and the Holy Ghost to be a True and Real Spirit; and this is to deny the Catholick Faith of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which cannot be a Real Trinity, cannot be really Three, if each of them be not truly and really what is signified by those Names. But though that Phrase of *Three Infinite Minds and Spirits* was used very innocently by me, only to signify Three Infinite Intelligent Persons, each of which is Infinite Mind and Spirit, and neither of them is each other, which is the Catholick Faith; yet I freely acknowledge, as I have done more than once, That it is liable to a very Heretical Tritheistick Sense, if understood absolutely, and in that Sense I always disowned it: And it is a sign Men have very little to say, when they make such a noise with an inconvenient Form of Speech, though expounded to a Catholick Sense: But the Margin will direct the Reader where he may find the true State of this Controversy.

The Distinction between Real and Nominal Trinitarians examined, &c.

But what is all this to my Sermon? which neither explains nor defends any particular Hypothesis about the Trinity, but is a general Vindication of the Christian Faith from the Pretences of Reason and Philosophy. But, *The Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and of the Church of* England, *concerning the Blessed Trinity, explained and asserted, against the dangerous Heterodoxies in a Sermon by Dr.* William Sherlock, *&c* And, *Remarks upon Dr.* William Sherlock's (*False and Treacherous*) *Defence and Explication of some Principal Articles of Faith*, &c. were more specious Titles, and both so good, that they knew not which to chuse, and therefore adorned the Title-Page

with one, and the Frontiſpiece with the other, that if ever a poor Sermon was confuted with Titles (which have a ſtrange Magick in them) this is utterly undone.

But it is time to conſider his *Remarks*, which exactly anſwer the Title, that they are nothing to the purpoſe. I am not at leiſure to follow him in all his Harangues; and his Wit and Buffoonry I deſpiſe too much to take notice of it; and when it appears that a Man has diſcharged all his Artillery of Witticiſms againſt his own Miſtakes, he is witty at his own Coſt too.

He has made an *Abſtract or Summary* (as he calls it, *P.* 4.) of my Sermon, but in his own Method, his own Words, and directly contrary to my Senſe: That is, he has abſtracted from every thing that is in the Sermon, that no Man living by his Abſtract can tell what the Subject or Drift of the Sermon was, or any one Argument contained in it: I'm ſure I who made the Sermon, knew nothing of it but by mere gueſs, as I read it in his Abſtract; and would thoſe Men who read theſe Remarks, be but ſo fair and honeſt as to read the Sermon too, there would need no other Anſwer.

The Firſt Branch of my Sermon in his Abſtract (*P.* 8.) is this; *Philoſophy and Reaſon are the only things which thoſe Men adore, who would have no God at all. And what makes ſome Men Atheiſts and Infidels, even the Philoſophick Tincture, and their adherence to Natural Reaſon, the ſame makes others to be Hereticks, that is, to be* Arians, Socinians, *and* Pelagians. Now any one would think that this were one of the Heads of my Sermon; which is ſo far from truth, that there is no ſuch Propoſition to be found there, but the contrary to this is to be found there in expreſs words.

In the firſt Page of my Sermon there are theſe words: *What ſome Men call Philoſophy and Reaſon (and there is nothing ſo fooliſh and abſurd which ſome Men will not call ſo) is the*

the only thing which thoſe Men adore, who would either have no God, or a God and Religion of their own making. And what Attempts ſome have made to undermine all Religion, and others to corrupt and transform the whole Frame of the Chriſtian Religion, upon a pretence of its contradicting Natural Reaſon and Philoſophy, is too well known to need a Proof. And ſoon after (*P.* 2.) *This vain Pretence to Reaſon and Philoſophy*; the κενὴ ἀπάτη, the vain deceit in my Text, which is applicable to all vain ſpurious Philoſophy, as well as *Platoniſm*, and is ſo meant by the Apoſtle. And *P.* 7. *Truly that which makes ſome men Infidels, makes others Hereticks, that is, a vain Pretence to Philoſophy.*

Now let any man judge, Whether this be to charge Atheiſm, Infidelity, and Hereſy, *upon Reaſon and Philoſophy*, or *upon what ſome men call Reaſon and Philoſophy, which may be very fooliſh and abſurd?* Whether *the Pretences of contradicting Reaſon and Philoſophy*, and *the vain Pretences to Philoſophy*, ſignify *Reaſon and Philoſophy?*

This is wilful Miſrepreſentation; for it is impoſſible he ſhould miſtake, I having expreſly diſtinguiſht between *theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy*, *and true Philoſophy*, (p. 3.) *Whoever conſiders what an Enemy theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy have always been to Religion, will ſee need enough for this Caution* (of the Text.) *True Reaſon, and the true knowledge of Nature, which is true Philoſophy, would certainly direct us to the acknowledgment and worſhip of that Supream Being, who made the World; and yet we know, there never was an Atheiſt without ſome pretence to Philoſophy:* Though it ſeems, as this Author tells us, (*p.* 9.) there has been an Arch-heretick, even *Socinus* himſelf without it; and ſo may all his Diſciples be too, and yet be vain Pretenders to Reaſon and Philoſophy; however, I am as Orthodox in this Point, as my Lord *Bacon* himſelf, whom he objects againſt me, whoſe Senſe I exactly expreſſed, though not his Words.

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But nothing can more fully declare my ſenſe in this particular, than what the Reader may find (*p.* 10.) 2dly. *Let us now conſider what great reaſon we have to reject all the vain Pretences to Reaſon and Philoſophy, when oppoſed to a Divine Revelation. For that is all the Apoſtle intends in this Caution, not to diſcourage the uſe of Reaſon, or the ſtudy of Philoſophy, which are great improvements, and a delightful entertainment of Human Minds, and with a wiſe and prudent conduct may be very ſerviceable to Religion too; but we muſt not ſet up any Concluſions in Philoſophy againſt the Chriſtian Faith; nor corrupt the Faith with a mixture of Philoſophy; nor reject any Revealed Truths for want of Natural Ideas to conceive them by.* Nothing can be plainer than this; That I am very far from condemning the ſober uſe of Reaſon and Philoſophy, though with the Apoſtle, I will not allow them to oppoſe the Authority of a Divine Revelation. So that our Author need not be ſo terribly frighted, as if this Innocent Sermon were a deſigned *revenge againſt the* Oxford *Heads, the Learning of the Place, and Philoſophy it ſelf*, (p. 1.) (though the Apoſtle indeed will not allow Philoſophy alone to make Decrees in Articles of Faith); here is no danger of ſetting up *Folly and Falſhood* (which would be to encroach upon his Province) or of writing a ſecond *Moriæ Encomium, or praiſe of Folly.* Here is no danger, that *the Articles of Faith ſhould diſagree with true Reaſon and Philoſophy*, though a vain appearance, a *Socinian* Philoſophy, may contradict the Articles of Faith. Nay *my Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen*, (p. 9.) notwithſtanding this Sermon, may very ſafely ſend *their Children to* Cambridge *or* Oxford, if they get good Tutors for them, who will teach them no *Socinian* Logick or Philoſophy: And which is more, we may confute Atheiſts and Infidels by Reaſon and Philoſophy, (*p.* 8.) without being at the charge of *buying a maſſy Quarto Bible, with Claſps and Boſſes, to knock 'em down with:* As he very wittily,

tily, and with great reverence to the Holy Scriptures, expreſſes it: For Reaſon and Philoſophy may confute Atheiſts and Infidels, though they have no Authority to make or unmake Articles of Faith, as to matters of pure Revelation. Nay more than this ſtill (if it be poſſible to pleaſe him), we will allow Reaſon and Philoſophy to confute Hereſies, though not to judge abſolutely in matters of Faith: Which I ſuppoſe is the reaſon, why, as he obſerves (*p.* 9.) *Hereticks, many of them, are no leſs bitter againſt this ſame (damnable) Philoſophy: They proteſt, eſpecially in their Latin Works, that 'tis this Philoſophy that corrupted and debauched Divinity.* *Damnable* is a very faſhionable word, and ſhews him to be well bred, and to have good Acquaintance; but it is a very great Truth, That though Catholick Chriſtians would never build their Faith on Philoſophy, yet Hereticks have always had great reaſon to rail at true Philoſophy, as I obſerved in my Sermon (*p.* 10.) *The importunity of Hereticks did very often engage the Catholick Fathers in Philoſophical Diſputes; but this they did, not to explain the Chriſtian Myſteries by Philoſophy but only to ſhew, that as incomprehenſible as theſe Myſteries are, the Philoſophy of Hereticks, and their Objections againſt theſe Articles, were very abſurd. And ſuch Diſputes as theſe may ſometimes be abſolutely neceſſary, and of great uſe to ſhame theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy, while we do not put the trial of our Faith upon this iſſue.* And thus much for his firſt Propoſition, (for it is none of mine) *that Reaſon and Philoſophy are the two Idols of Atheiſts and Hereticks, and that make Atheiſts to be Atheiſts, and Hereticks to be Hereticks,* (p. 12.)

His ſecond Propoſition (*Ibid.*) runs thus. *That to aſcertain the very and true Faith, we muſt attend only to that meaning of Scripture which the Words and Phraſes do imply: Rejecting all mixture of Reaſon and Philoſophy in our Diſputes about Religion, and our Inquiries about the meaning of Scripture.*

Scripture. Now let any Reader try, whether he can find any ſuch Propoſition as this in all my Sermon, either in words or ſenſe. I could not for ſome time gueſs, what ſhadow of pretence he could have for charging ſuch a Propoſition on me: I did indeed in ſome principal Articles diſtinguiſh between Faith and Philoſophy; between what is revealed in Scripture, and what Philoſophical Diſputes, which the Scripture takes no notice of, have been raiſed about them, and warned all men from mixing and corrupting the Faith with Philoſophy; but does this forbid us Expounding Scripture agreeable to Reaſon and common Senſe, and Philoſophy too, where Senſe, and Reaſon, and Philoſophy, are proper judges? They are not the ſupreme and abſolute judges in matters of pure Revelation; But does it hence follow, that they cannot judge of their proper Objects? Do I any where ſay, That we muſt always expound the Scripture to a literal Senſe? That when Chriſt is called a *Way*, a *Door*, a *Rock*, we muſt underſtand this literally? And yet this is plainly what he would have to be my Senſe, as his beloved inſtance of Tranſubſtantiation ſhews.

In this Sermon I have given no Rules for Expounding Scripture, which in time I hope I may. But what I aſſert is this, That when by all thoſe Methods which Wiſe Men obſerve in expounding any Writing, we have found out what the true ſenſe of Scripture muſt be, we muſt not reject ſuch Doctrines meerly becauſe natural Reaſon cannot conceive or comprehend them. *That Revelation as to ſuch matters as are knowable only by Revelation, muſt ſerve inſtead of Senſe, natural Ideas, and natural Reaſon,* (p. 11.) This gives a plain Anſwer to all his Cant about Tranſubſtantiation, from our Saviour's words, *This is my Body,* (p. 12.) For is there no way of knowing what is Bread, and what is Fleſh, but by Revelation? Is not this the proper object of Senſe and Reaſon? And then it does not come within my

my Rule; for Senſe and Reaſon muſt judge of their proper Objects, though Revelation muſt ſerve us inſtead of Senſe and Reaſon, as to ſuch matters as can be known only by Revelation; that is, as I expreſly add, we muſt upon the Authority of Revelation *believe things which we do not ſee, things which we have no natural notion or conception of, things which are not evident to natural Reaſon:* As for inſtance, If it be Revealed in Scripture that God has an Eternal Word, his Only-Begotten Son; and that in time this Word was made Fleſh and dwelt among us; this Son of God became Man; that God ſent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law: Though neither Senſe nor natural Ideas, nor meer natural Reaſon, give us any notice of it; yet if we will own a Revelation, we muſt believe it upon the ſole Authority of Revelation: But though Revelation in ſuch caſes be Senſe and Reaſon to us, becauſe we have no other means of Knowledge; yet Senſe muſt judge of the natural Objects of Senſe, and Reaſon of the Objects of natural Reaſon; but Revelation was never intended to unteach us what Senſe and natural Reaſon evidently teach, and therefore it cannot teach us, that Bread is Fleſh, and Wine is Blood.

But this *Socinian* is got ſo far towards Popery, that he will not allow Senſe to be judge of this matter, whether the Bread be Tranſubſtantiated or not, and that for a very pleaſant Reaſon; his words are theſe, (p. 13.) *He cannot have recourſe to Senſe in the caſe, 'tis only Reaſon and Philoſophy can help him out: For though the Apoſtles, who ſaw and taſted that it was Bread only, and not Fleſh, might have appealed alſo to their Senſes; yet we that never ſaw or taſted the Subſtance which Jeſus gave then to the Diſciples, can know by Reaſon and Philoſophy only, by nothing elſe, that it was not his Fleſh and Blood:* That is, I can't know by Senſe that Chriſt gave Bread and Wine, and not Fleſh and Blood to his Diſciples, becauſe I did not See and Taſte my ſelf

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that very Subſtance that Chriſt gave to his Diſciples: But can I judge by Senſe that what I my ſelf See and Taſte in the Lord's Supper, is Bread and Wine after Conſecration, not Fleſh and Blood? For that is the Queſtion between us and the Church of *Rome*; not, whether we receive the ſame now which Chriſt gave to the Apoſtles in the firſt Inſtitution (which they take for granted, and to queſtion which, is meer Scepticiſm) but what that change is, which the words of Conſecration make in the Elements to this day; and if we cannot judge of this by Senſe, the Church of *Rome* have a better Plea for themſelves than I thought they had. And if I can't now judge by my own Senſes what it was Chriſt gave to his Apoſtles, and what they Saw and Taſted, I fear it will much weaken ſome other very good Arguments againſt Tranſubſtantiation.

But how will this *Socinian*, who rejects the Evidence of Senſe, confute Tranſubſtantiation? Why that is eaſily done by Reaſon and Philoſophy; as thus, *The Text expreſly ſays, it was Bread which he bleſſed and brake, and called it his Body; therefore it was his Body in Sign and Signification, not in Reality. All this is Arguing, 'tis Reaſon that convinces us, not Senſe, that the Subſtance he divided to them was indeed Bread, not his Fleſh, which he neither bleſſed nor brake.*

This is Reaſoning indeed; But did I ever reject Reaſoning and Arguing about the meaning of Scripture Words and Phraſes, and the true Senſe and Interpretation of Scripture? Is there no difference between Reaſoning about the Senſe of Scripture, and ſetting up the Concluſions of meer natural Reaſon and Philoſophy againſt the plain and evident Doctrines of Scripture? It is certain I made a manifeſt diſtinction between them, p. 9. *In all theſe caſes we are concerned to enquire what the true ſenſe of the Article is; for this the Scripture teaches, and ſo far our Faith is concerned, and theſe are not only juſtifiable, but neceſſary Diſputes,*

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if the true Faith be neceſſary. And ſuch were the Diſputes of the Catholick Fathers with the Sabellian, Arian, *and* Photinian *Hereticks, &c.* So that I allow of Arguing and Reaſoning as much as he does; and add, But that which we are to beware of, is not to mix *Philoſophy with our Faith, nor to admit of any meer Philoſophical Objections againſt the Faith, nor to attempt any Explication of theſe Myſteries, beyond what the Scriptures and the Faith and Practice of the Catholick Church will juſtify.* This diſtinction he knew very well, but very honeſtly diſſembles it, and endeavours to impoſe upon his Readers, as if Reaſoning and Arguing about the Senſe of Scripture, and reſolving our Faith into meer natural Reaſon and Philoſophy, were the ſame thing.

He was aware what Anſwer would be given to this, and therefore in the very next Paragraph he confutes his own Reaſoning from Scripture, and proves that the Text does not confute Tranſubſtantiation: *But if our Preacher,* ſays he, *believes it was only Bread, becauſe the Text it ſelf calls it Bread* (which was his own Argument), *let him conſider, that ſeeing what was called Bread before Chriſt bleſſed it, after the bleſſing he calls it his Body; we cannot know by Senſe or by the Text, but by Reaſon and Philoſophy only, that it was not changed (by the bleſſing) into what now he calls it, namely, his Body.* But if *This* ſignifies *Bread,* then *This is my Body,* ſignifies, *This Bread is my Body*; and if Bread be his Body, then his Sacramental Body is not Fleſh: But I do not intend to diſpute this Point with him, but only obſerve, That to ſet up his Reaſon and Philoſophy to be abſolute Judges in Matters of Faith, he will not allow either Senſe or Scripture to confute Tranſubſtantiation.

It cannot but give all ſober Chriſtians a juſt Indignation, to ſee the moſt Sacred and Venerable Myſteries perpetually ridicul'd at this Prophane rate! In the Reign of King *James* there was a Pamphlet publiſhed to reconcile men to

Tranſubſtantiation, by repreſenting the Doctrine of the Trinity to the full as abſurd, and chargeable with as many Contradictions as Tranſubſtantiation it ſelf: This was then charged on the Papiſts, and they were ſufficiently expos'd for it; but a Great Man has lately informed us, That it was writ by a *Socinian*, to make men Papiſts or *Socinians*, as it ſhould happen; which was a Glorious Deſign at that time of day, for men who take it ill if you will not allow them to be Proteſtants, and to enjoy the Liberty of Proteſtants: For they could not but ſee that Popery was then grown very Faſhionable and Tempting by the Favour and Frowns of a Popiſh Prince; and that the generality of Chriſtians did ſo firmly believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, that could they have perſuaded them, as they endeavoured, That Tranſubſtantiation was as reaſonable a Doctrine as the Trinity, it was much more likely that they would turn Papiſts than *Socinians*.

Inſtead of Popery men are now running into the other Extremes of Atheiſm, Deiſm, and a Contempt of all Reveal'd Religion, and that upon a pretence of making mere Natural Reaſon and Philoſophy their ſole Guide and Judge; and now our *Socinians* have a new Game to play; and if they dare not abſolutely deny the Authority of Revelation (which in many Inſtances they have ſhewn a good Inclination to), yet they give a ſuperior Authority to Reaſon, which will ſerve as well, and make leſs noiſe than to reject all Revelation. And if you ſhew them how abſurd this is, to pretend to own a Divine Revelation, and to make Revelation ſubmit to mere Natural Reaſon and Philoſophy, they preſently take ſanctuary in Tranſubſtantiation, and defend it againſt the Evidence of Senſe, and the Authority of Scripture, to make Reaſon and Philoſophy the Supreme Judge in Matters of Faith; and in the mean time matter not what becomes of Religion, what advantage they give either to Popery or Deiſm, ſo they can but expoſe the Faith of the Trinity. He

He has given us a little Specimen of it here; but the ſame Author, as far as I can gueſs from the ſame Words and the ſame Thoughts, has with his uſual Civility attack'd my Lord Biſhop of *Sarum* upon this Argument, which upon this occaſion I ſhall briefly conſider.

Conſiderations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 21, 22.

His Lordſhip in vindication of the Chriſtian Myſteries, with great reaſon rejects Tranſubſtantiation out of the number of Myſteries, becauſe it contradicts Senſe in the Object of Senſe; his words are theſe: *Tranſubſtantiation muſt not be a Myſtery, becauſe there is againſt it the Evidence of Senſe in an Object of Senſe: For Senſe plainly repreſents to us the Bread and Wine to be ſtill the ſame that they were before the Conſecration.* Now I cannot think this Author in earneſt in the two firſt Anſwers he gives to this. His firſt Anſwer is, That *it is not pretended by the Papiſts, that the Bread and Wine have received any the leaſt Change in what is an Object of Senſe.* This is a Diſcovery worthy its Author, that the Papiſts don't deny that they ſee, and feel, and taſte, and ſmell the ſenſible Qualities of Bread and Wine: For who ever charged them with ſuch a Contradiction to Senſe as this? But our Senſes judge of the Subſtances of things by their ſenſible qualities; judge that to be Bread and Wine, which has all the qualities of Bread and Wine: And therefore to ſay, as the Papiſts do, That what our Sight, and Taſte, and Smell tell us has all the qualities of Bread and Wine, is not Bread and Wine, does not indeed contradict our Senſes as to ſenſible qualities, but contradicts that Judgment our Senſes make of the Natures of things from their ſenſible qualities: And this is that Contradiction to Senſe which the Biſhop juſtly charges upon Tranſubſtantiation; as is evident in his very words.

In his Second Anſwer he Diſputes againſt the *Infallibility of* our Senſes, as he calls it, by ſuch Common Arguments as every Freſhman knows how to Anſwer; only I do not remember, that the Deluſions of our Dreams

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uſed to be objected againſt the Evidence of Senſe; but ſuppoſe our Senſes may deceive us in ſome few inſtances wherein both Senſe and Reaſon can Correct the miſtake, muſt they therefore deceive in the Nature of Bread and Wine? Can he prove, that they ever deceive us with Qualities and Accidents without a Subſtance? For that is the Cheat of Tranſubſtantiation: It is not pretended, as he obſerved in his Firſt Anſwer, That our Senſes deceive us in the Colour, or Figure, or Taſte, or Smell of Bread and Wine; and therefore all his inſtances of the Deception of our Senſes are nothing to the purpoſe; but let him give us any one inſtance of the other kind, if he can, and then we will believe Tranſubſtantiation in Contradiction to our Senſes.

But does he conſider, what the Conſequence of this Argument is? He will not allow it a good Argument againſt Tranſubſtantiation, That it contradicts Senſe, becauſe our Senſes may deceive us in the Objects of Senſe (which by the way makes his inſtance of the Deluſions of Dreams, which are not the Objects of Senſe, very impertinent;) now if contradiction to Senſe be not a good Objection, becauſe Senſe is not Infallible, what will become of his great Argument of Contradiction to Reaſon? For all men confeſs, That Reaſon is not ſo *Infallible* as Senſe is, as is evident from all the Diſputes and Claſhings of Reaſon, and thoſe Abſurdities and Contradictions which contending Parties mutually charge upon each other; and if a Contradiction to *Fallible* Senſe be not a good Objection againſt the Truth of any thing, how comes a Contradiction to *much more Fallible* Reaſon to be ſo unanſwerable an Objection? And then we may much more ſafely believe a Trinity in Unity, notwithſtanding all their pretended Contradictions to Reaſon, than we can believe Tranſubſtantiation in Contradiction to Senſe. But in his Third Anſwer, he ſeems to be in good earneſt, and I ſhall conſider it as ſuch; and it is this. *Tran-*

Tranſubſtantiation is contradicted by Senſe, ſaith his Lordſhip, in an Object of Senſe; therefore 'tis a falſe Myſtery. This is as much as to ſay, That a Faculty or Power judging of its proper Object, always judges truly, and muſt determine our Belief. He muſt ſay this, or his Reaſoning is nothing. I ask now of what Faculty or Power is Almighty God the Object. He will Anſwer, God is the Object, not of Senſe, which diſcerns him not, but of Reaſon, which diſcovers, and ſees this moſt Glorious Being. Therefore Reaſon, by his Lordſhip's own Argument, judges infallibly concerning God, and muſt determine our Belief about him: We muſt hearken to Reaſon, when it finds Contradictions in what men affirm concerning God. Now notwithſtanding his vain Brags, and his Triumphant Challenge to the Biſhop, a very little Skill will Anſwer this Argument. For,

1. The Biſhop need not ſay, becauſe it is not true, That every Faculty and Power judges as certainly of its proper Object, as Senſe does, and then his Argument is quite loſt: For if Senſe judges more certainly than Reaſon, then a manifeſt Contradiction to Senſe is a more unanſwerable Objection, than any appearing and pretended Contradictions to Reaſon. I believe this Author is the firſt man who ever thus univerſally equalled the Evidence of Reaſon to that of Senſe; or that ever affirmed, that *Reaſon could judge infallibly of God.* And if Reaſon may be miſtaken (which I ſhall take for granted) eſpecially in the Infinite and Incomprehenſible Nature of God, ſome appearing Contradictions, or what ſome men will call Contradictions, are not a ſufficient reaſon to reject a Revelation, and to disbelieve what God tells us of Himſelf, and his own Nature.

2dly. Whatever certainty we allow to our Faculties in judging of their proper Objects, we muſt extend it no farther than to what belongs to the judgment of that Faculty: The ſame thing may be the Object of different

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Faculties, as it is of our different Senſes; but every Faculty, and every Senſe, judges of nothing in any Object, but only what belongs to it ſelf. All the Objects of Senſe are the Objects of Reaſon too; but Senſe judges of nothing but what belongs to Senſe, and Reaſon of what belongs to Reaſon; and Reaſon can judge no farther of any Object, than it is knowable by Reaſon; and not only the Divine, but even Created Nature has ſuch Secrets and Myſteries as are not knowable by Reaſon; and therefore it is manifeſt Ignorance or Sophiſtry, to conclude from *God's being the Object of Reaſon, therefore Reaſon judges infallibly concerning God:* For, not to Diſpute about the *Infallible Judgment* of Reaſon, God is the Object of Reaſon, becauſe Reaſon can know ſomething concerning God; but God can be the Object of Reaſon no farther than he is knowable by Reaſon; and therefore if there be any thing which Natural Reaſon cannot know of God (as I hope this Author himſelf will own), with reſpect to ſuch matters God is not the Object of Reaſon, and Reaſon cannot judge at all, much leſs *judge infallibly concerning God.* But as Senſe leaves room for Reaſon in the ſame Object, ſo Reaſon leaves room for Faith.

But muſt we not *hearken to Reaſon when it finds Contradictions in what men affirm concerning God?* Yes, moſt certainly, as far as God is the Object of Reaſon, and knowable by Reaſon, but no farther; for in ſuch matters as Reaſon cannot judge of at all, it cannot judge of Contradictions. Senſe and Reaſon can judge of Contradictions only for themſelves, or as far as their judgment reaches, but may appear Contradictions themſelves to each other. As for inſtance:

Reaſon aſſures us that Man conſiſts of Soul and Body, which are cloſely united to each other, and yet the Union of Spirit and Matter is no better than contradiction to the judgment of Senſe; for Senſe knows no Union but by Contact,

tact, nor any Contact but between Bodies, which have extended and ſolid Parts, that can touch each other; ſo that an Union without Contact is one contradiction to the judgment of Senſe, and a Contact without extended ſolid parts, which a Spirit has not, is another; and yet Reaſon does not matter theſe Contradictions to the judgment of Senſe, becauſe Senſe is not the Judge of ſuch things: And it is the ſame Caſe between Reaſon and Faith, which receives its information from a Divine Revelation, concerning ſuch Matters as are not knowable by Natural Reaſon: ſhould Reaſon contradict Faith in ſuch Matters as Reaſon is no Judge of, this is no more an Objection againſt the Superior Evidence and Authority of Faith, than the Judgment of Senſe is againſt the Evidence of Reaſon; ſuch Contradictions are not in the nature of things, but are owing to our ignorance of Nature, and preſumption in judging of what we cannot underſtand.

The Example he gives of ſuch a contradiction to Reaſon, is *a Trinity of Perſons, every one of which is perfect God, and yet all of them but One God*; but for my life, I cannot ſee this plain Contradiction, That Three Perſons, each of which has all the Perfections of Divinity, and is perfect God, ſhould be ſo eſſentially united in the ſame One Eternal and Infinite Nature, as to be but One God. This is not a Contradiction *in terminis*, it is not Three Perſons and but One Perſon, or Three Gods and but One God, but Three Divine Perſons, and One God. If the Unity of the Godhead conſiſted in the Unity of a Perſon, I grant it would be a flat Contradiction to ſay, Three Perſons and One God, which would be equivalent to Three Gods and One God; but if the Unity of the Godhead conſiſts in the Unity of Nature, that there is but One Eternal and Infinite Nature, which is the One God, and this Unity, and Identity of Nature be perfectly and entirely preſerved in Three Divine Perſons, it is ſo far from a Contradiction to

ſay, That Three Perſons are One God, that it would be a Contradiction to ſay, That Three Divine Perſons, who have the ſame One Identical Nature, ſhould be more than One God; for that is to ſay, That One Divine Nature, which can be but One God, is Three Gods.

Now this is all that Natural Reaſon tells us of the Unity of the Godhead, That there is, and can be, but One Eternal Infinite Nature, which is but One God; this we expreſly teach, and therefore do not contradict Reaſon; but then Scripture tells us, That there are Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to whom the Name and Attributes of God, and therefore this One Infinite Undivided Nature, belong. This Reaſon boggles at, and *Socinians* call a Contradiction; but it is ſuch a Contradiction, as Senſe would judge the Union of Spirit and Matter to be: At moſt it is an imaginary Contradiction in the Subſiſtence of the Divine Nature, which Reaſon knows nothing about, and therefore can make no judgment of; and ſuch appearing Contradictions are no Objections, becauſe they may be no Contradictions; as we are ſure they are none, when the Doctrines charged with theſe Contradictions are taught in Scripture.

There is one diſtinction, which ſeems to me to ſet this matter in a clear light, and to anſwer all the Pretences of Contradictions; and that is, The diſtinction between Contradictions in Logick and Philoſophy. A Contradiction in Logick, is when two Propoſitions in expreſs terms contradict each other; and all men grant that both parts of ſuch Contradictions cannot be true, as that there are Three Gods, and but One God, which is to ſay, that there are, and that there are not Three Gods; that there is, and that there is not, but One only God. A Contradiction in Philoſophy, is when any thing is affirmed concerning the Nature or Eſſential Properties of any Being, which ſeems to contradict all the Notions and Ideas we have of Nature in other

other Beings, and ſuch Contradictions as theſe may be both true; for the Natures of things may be contrary to, and contradict each other, and yet both of them be true and real Beings. There are infinite Inſtances of this in all Nature; the Ideas of Hot and Cold, of White and Black, of Light and Darkneſs, of ſolid and fluid Bodies, of Matter and Spirit, are direct Contradictions, in this notion of a Contradiction, to each other: And had we known but one of theſe Oppoſites by our Natural Ideas, and the other had been revealed to us, we might as juſtly have cried out of Contradictions, as the *Socinians* now do, when you mention a Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the Divine Nature. For Heat contradicts the Idea of Cold, and Fluid of Solid; as much as Three Perſons in the Unity of Nature, contradicts the Unity of Nature in the Unity of a Perſon: This latter indeed is the natural notion we have, That there is but One Perſon in One Subſiſting Intelligent Nature; for we have no example of any thing elſe, and therefore can have no natural Idea of any other Unity; but this does not prove, that it cannot be otherwiſe; for there may be Oppoſitions and Contrarieties in Nature; and did we but conſider what an infinite diſtance and unlikeneſs there is between God and Creatures, we ſhould not think it reaſonable to judge of the Divine Nature by the Ideas of Created Nature.

This is a very real and ſenſible diſtinction between Contradictions in Logick, and in Nature and Philoſophy, and there is a certain way to know them: Logical Contradictions are always immediately reducible to *is*, and *is not*; for they affirm and deny the ſame thing in the ſame ſence: The Contradictions in Nature and Philoſophy are only the oppoſition and contrariety there is between the Ideas of ſeveral Beings, which can never be reduced to a Contradiction in Logick, but through Ignorance or Miſtake, by changing the ſenſe and uſe of words. Let any *Socinian* try the Ex-

periment in the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and reduce it to ſuch a Contradiction if he can. A Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the Divine Nature, is a Contradiction to that Idea we have of the Unity of Perſon and Nature in created Beings, but this is no Contradiction in Logick; for it is not a Contradiction in the ſame Nature and Being, as all Contradictions in Logick muſt be, but it is a Contrariety or Contradiction (if we will ſo call it) between the Unity and Perſonalities of two very different Natures, the Divine and the Created Nature; and all the Contradiction that can be made of it, is no more than this, That the Unity of the Divine Nature, which is perfect and undivided in Three diſtinct Perſons, contradicts the Notion of Unity in a Created Nature, which admits but of One Perſon in One Individual Nature: But there are a thouſand ſuch Contradictions in Nature, that is, different Natures, whoſe Ideas are oppoſite and contrary to each other, and yet all of them real Beings: But could they make a Trinity in Unity contradict it ſelf, that the Trinity ſhould in expreſs terms deſtroy the Unity, and the Unity the Trinity, this would be ſomewhat to the purpoſe; for it would prove a Contradiction in Logick, when the Terms deſtroy each other; but then the Trinity and Unity muſt be the ſame; a Trinity of Perſons, and but One Perſon; or a Trinity of Natures, and but one Nature: But a Trinity of Perſons, true, proper, ſubſiſting Perſons, in the Unity of Nature, which is the Catholick Faith, is not a Contradiction in Logick, though it contradicts the Notion of Human Perſonalities, which it may do, and yet be very true. This is abundantly enough to ſhew the Weakneſs and Folly of this *Socinian* Cant about *Tranſubſtantiation*; the Impiety, Prophaneneſs, and miſchievous Conſequences of it, let others conſider.

His Third Charge is, That I ſay, That *as we are Chriſtians, and unleſs we will be underſtood to reject the Supreme Autho-*

Authority of Divine Revelation, we muſt believe thoſe Doctrines which are thought to be moſt myſterious and inconceivable, notwithſtanding any Objection from Reaſon or from Philoſophy againſt 'em. He that believes no farther than Natural Reaſon approves, believes his Reaſon, not the Revelation; he is a Natural Philoſopher, not a Believer. He believes the Scriptures as he would believe Plato *or* Tully, *not as Inſpired Writings, but as agreeable to Reaſon, and as the reſult of wiſe and deep Thoughts*, p. 14.

Here he has taken ſome of my Words, and ſo put them together, as to conceal the whole Force of the Argument, which he always takes care to do. My buſineſs (*P.* 10, 11, *&c.*) was to prove, "That we ought to believe thoſe "Doctrines which are thought the moſt myſterious and in- "conceivable, notwithſtanding any Objections from Na- "tural Reaſon and Philoſophy againſt them: And this "I proved from the Nature, Uſe, and Authority of Re- "velation. That Revelation, as to ſuch matters as are "knowable only by Revelation, muſt ſerve inſtead of "Senſe, Natural Ideas, and Natural Reaſon. That if "we believe upon God's Authority (which is the ſtrict "Notion of a Divine Faith) we muſt believe without any "Natural Evidence, merely becauſe God has revealed it; "and then we muſt believe ſuch things as are not evident "to Senſe and Reaſon. That to believe no farther than "Natural Reaſon can conceive and comprehend, is to re- "ject the Divine Authority of Revelation, and to deſtroy "the diſtinction between Reaſon and Faith. He that will "believe no farther than his Reaſon approves, believes his "Reaſon, not the Revelation, and is in truth a Natural "Philoſopher, not a Believer.

Here any man may perceive that our *Socinian* was plainly baffled, for he has not one word to anſwer, but only ſays, that I contradict this my ſelf in my Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, where I aſſert, That *ſuppoſe the natural*

natural Conſtruction of the Words of Scripture import ſuch a Senſe as is contrary to ſome evident Principle of Reaſon, I won't believe it: Of this more preſently; but what is this to the purpoſe? Is there no difference between what Reaſon can't conceive, comprehend, approve, and what the Reaſon of all Mankind contradicts? No difference between believing *what we do not ſee, what we have no natural notion or conception of,* what is *not evident to natural Reaſon,* and believing in contradiction to ſenſe, and ſuch natural Notions, and natural Evidence, as all Mankind agree in?

But he is very much troubled, according to his Principle of believing Scripture no farther than Natural Reaſon and Philoſophy approves, how to diſtinguiſh between believing *Plato* and *Tully,* and believing a Revelation. He ſays, They look upon *Plato* and *Tully,* as *great Men,* but *Fallible* (*p.* 15.) and therefore may take the liberty to diſſent from them; and believe them no farther than Reaſon approves: Very right; but will he believe the Scripture any farther than Reaſon can *conceive, comprehend, approve?* Have a care of that: But they will do as well; if Reaſon will not approve of ſuch Scripture Doctrines, as it can't conceive and comprehend, they will Expound and Torture Scripture, till it ſubmits to Reaſon: For *it is more congruous to think, that an Inſpired Writer uſes a Figurative, or it may be a Catachreſtical* (very Catachreſtical) *Expreſſion or Phraſe, than that he delivers flat contradictions, or downright impoſſibilities:* That is to ſay, they muſt by all means believe, or pretend to believe, the Scripture; but then they muſt never own any thing to be in Scripture, which their Reaſon calls *a flat contradiction, or downright impoſſibility*; which is the very ſame thing; for the reaſon why they will not allow, that the Scripture contains any thing, which their Reaſon does not approve, is becauſe they muſt believe the Scripture, but muſt

muſt not believe it beyond their own Reaſon and Comprehenſion; and the only difference they make between *Plato* and *Tully*, and the Scripture is, That they can ſafely reject their Authority, when they pleaſe, but muſt be at the trouble of Expounding away whatever they do not approve in the Scripture.

This is what I told them in the *Vindication*; and as *Impious* as this Author thinks it, I will venture to Tranſcribe that whole Paragraph.

"But I have not done with our Author thus; but muſt "give him a little more about Expounding Scripture ac- "cording to Reaſon: For I affirm, that Natural Reaſon "is not the Rule and Meaſure of Expounding Scripture, "no more than it is of Expounding any other Writing. "The true and only way to interpret any Writing, even the "Scriptures themſelves, is to examine the uſe and propriety "of Words and Phraſes; the Connexion, Scope, and De- "ſign of the Text, its alluſion to Ancient Cuſtoms and Uſa- "ges, or Diſputes, *&c.* For there is no other good reaſon "to be given for any Expoſition, but that the words ſig- "nify ſo, and the circumſtances of the place, and appa- "rent Scope of the Writer requires it. *Vindication*, p. 150.

"But our Author (as many others do) ſeems to con- "found the Reaſons of believing any Doctrine, with the "Rules of Expounding a Writing. We muſt believe no- "thing that contradicts the plain and expreſs Dictate of "Natural Reaſon, which all Mankind agree in, whatever "pretence of Revelation there be for it; Well, ſay they, "then you muſt Expound Scripture ſo as to make it agree "with the neceſſary Principles and Dictates of Reaſon: "No, ſay I, that does not follow; I muſt Expound Scri- "pture according to the uſe and ſignifications of the Words; "and muſt not force my own Senſe on it, if it will not "bear it. But ſuppoſe then, that the Natural Conſtructi- "on of the words import ſuch a ſenſe as is contrary to

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"ſome evident Principle of Reaſon; Then I wont believe "it. How? Not believe Scripture? No, no, I will be- "lieve no pretended Revelation, which contradicts the plain "Dictates of Reaſon, which all Mankind agree in; and "were I perſuaded, that thoſe Books, which we call the "Holy Scriptures, did ſo, I wou'd not believe them; and "this is a fairer and honeſter way, than to force them to "ſpeak, what they never intended, and what every impar- "tial man, who reads them, muſt think was never intend- "ed that we may believe them: To put our own Senſe on "Scripture, without reſpect to the uſe of words, and to the "Reaſon and Scope of the Text, is not to believe Scri- "pture, but to teach it to ſpeak our Language; is not to "ſubmit to the Authority of Scripture, but to make Scri- "pture ſubmit to our Reaſon, even in ſuch matters as are "confeſſedly above Reaſon, as the Infinite Nature and "Eſſence of God is.

"Though I am never ſo well aſſured of the Divine Au- "thority of any Book, yet I muſt Expound it, as I do "other Writings; for when God vouchſafes to ſpeak to us "in our own Language, we muſt underſtand his words, "juſt as we do, when they are ſpoke by men: Indeed "when I am ſure that it is an Inſpired Writing, I lay it "down for a Principle, That it contains nothing abſurd and "contradictious, or repugnant to the received Principles of "Natural Reaſon; but this does not give me Authority to "Expound the words of Scripture to any other ſenſe, than "what they will naturally bear, to reconcile them with "ſuch Notions as I call reaſon; for if one man has this "liberty, another may take it, and the Scripture will be "tuned to every man's private Conceit; and therefore in "caſe the plain ſenſe of Scripture contradicts thoſe Noti- "ons I have of things, if it be poſſible to be true, I ſub- "mit to the Authority of Scripture; if it ſeems to include "a Contradiction and Impoſſibility, if that Contradiction

"be

" be not plain and notorious, and in ſuch matters, as I am " ſure, I perfectly underſtand, there I ſubmit again, and " conclude it is no Contradiction, though I cannot com- " prehend how it is; if I can by no means reconcile it, I " will confeſs, I do not underſtand it, and will not pretend " to give any ſenſe of it, much leſs to give ſuch a ſenſe of " it, as the words will not bear.

His Fourth Charge is, that I ſay, *Difficulty of conceiving a thing, nay, the abſolute unconceivableneſs of it, muſt not hinder our aſſent to what is contained in Revelation; becauſe we do not disbelieve what is made known to us by Senſe or by Reaſon, notwithſtanding any difficulty or inconceivableneſs adhering to ſuch things.* Theſe are neither my Words nor my Argument. My Argument is this; That ſince, as I had ſhewn, in matters of pure Revelation, which can be known no other way, *Revelation muſt ſtand in the place of Senſe and Reaſon, we muſt allow no Objections againſt revealed Myſteries, but what we will allow to be good Objections againſt Senſe and Reaſon. Now no man queſtions the truth of what he ſees and feels, or what he can prove to be true by plain and undeniable Reaſon, meerly becauſe there are unconceivable difficulties in it, as there is in every thing, even the moſt certain and familiar things in Nature: And if revealed Truths are not more unconceivable than many Natural Objects of Senſe and Reaſon, why ſhould their being unconceivable be a greater Objection againſt believing a Revelation, than it is againſt believing our Senſe and Reaſon in matters equally unconceivable?* (Serm. p. 13.)

This Argument is eaſily underſtood, but can never be Anſwered; and therefore he wiſely reſolved not to underſtand it. In Anſwer to this he tells us, That he does not always believe his Senſes, nor *his Reaſon neither, when it is not clear, but perplext with difficulties, or darken-*

ing doubts, but eſpecially when there is a remarkable and manifeſt inconceivableneſs. Nor do I require he ſhould; but my only Queſtion is, Whether he does not believe, both his Senſes and Reaſon, that there are many things in the World, whoſe Natures are ſo myſterious, that he cannot conceive or comprehend the Reaſons and Philoſophy of them? That though he ſees Men and Beaſts, Heaven and Earth, Sun, Moon, and Stars, he will not believe, that there are ſuch things as he ſees, becauſe he cannot underſtand the Philoſophy of their Natures, and ſees a great many things done by them, which are perfectly unaccountable, and would have been thought abſolutely impoſſible, had we not ſeen them done? Theſe are all *the contradictions and impoſſibilities, which I ſay men may make or find, when they know not the Philoſophical Natures of things, nor how they act, and yet will be reaſoning and gueſſing at them*; which this wiſe Author calls a Sermon for Contradictions. But do I require any man to believe Contradictions? Nay, do I ſay, that there are any ſuch Contradictions? But this, I ſay, that there are ſuch unconceivable Myſteries, in all Created Nature, much more in the Incomprehenſible Nature of God, as ſome *Gotham Philoſophers* (as he who knows them beſt calls them) charge with impoſſibilities and contradictions; and yet theſe *Gotham Philoſophers* are ſo wiſe as not to disbelieve their Senſes as to the being of thoſe things, how unconceivable and incomprehenſible ſoever their natures are; and this is all I ask, that in matters of pure Revelation we give the ſame credit to Revelation, that in the Objects of ſenſe we give to ſenſe, *i. e.* not to disbelieve what is revealed, As, that God has an Eternal Son, and that this Eternal Son in time was made Man, becauſe the Eternal Generation and Incarnation are inconceivable Myſteries; as we do not disbelieve, that there are any Men in the World, becauſe Human Generations, and the

the Union of Soul and Body are inconceivable Myſteries in Nature.

Towards the Concluſion of my Sermon, I Anſwered Two Objections againſt believing a Revelation as to ſuch Doctrines which are inconceivable and incomprehenſible to meer Natural Reaſon. And here to prepare the way, he firſt ſcorns the Objections, *as never made before, or however by none but my ſelf. That I paſs over known and very dangerous Objections, and Anſwer only to Chimera's and Follies, never ſuggeſted or thought of by any.* (p. 18.)

I am glad to find, that he grows aſhamed of theſe *Socinian* Chimera's and Follies; but let us hear what they are.

1. *It is thought very unnatural, that when God has made us reaſonable Creatures, and therefore made natural Reaſon to us the meaſure of truth and falſhood, he ſhould require us to believe without Reaſon, as we muſt do, if he reveal ſuch things to us, as we do not, and cannot poſſibly know the reaſons of: If we muſt believe with our underſtanding, how can we believe things, which we cannot underſtand?* Now this Socinian *does not believe, that any Sect of Religious ever made this or the like Objection*; Let him, as he ſays, *ſnuff his Candle* once more, and look into the late *Socinian* Pamphlets: What is the meaning of all their Zeal for Reaſon in this Cauſe, of their great noiſe and outcry about Myſteries, Nonſenſe, Contradictions? What is the meaning of their Expounding Scripture by Reaſon, not *like Fools, but like Wiſe men?* Why has this Author ſhewn ſuch a furious Zeal againſt believing a Revelation notwithſtanding any Objections from meer Natural Reaſon and Philoſophy againſt it? If, as he now ſays, *our Reaſon and Underſtandings are finite and imperfect, and the Wiſdom and Power of God moſt perfect: Therefore he may reveal many things to us, to be believed by us, though we underſtand them not, nor have any other cauſe of our believing*

them, but only God's Revelation of them, (p. 19.) Nothing can be more true, than what he ſays, *that Reaſon is the meaſure of truth and falſhood, but not the frail Fallible Reaſon of Men, but the Infallible Wiſdom of God.* If he be ſincere and hearty in this, we are perfectly agreed; for this is the very Doctrine of my Sermon, which he has ſo furiouſly oppoſed, or would be thought to oppoſe; for to ſpeak the Truth, he has not oppoſed the Doctrine of my Sermon; but, in his own Language, his *own Chimera's and Follies.*

But here is either a Fallacy in his Words, or he gives up his Cauſe, which it is plain he never intended: The Queſtion is not abſolutely, What *is the Rule and Meaſure of Truth and Falſhood,* but what is ſo to us? Now if he will allow, *that Frail and Fallible Reaſon* is not *a Rule to us,* then we may believe things, which our Reaſon does not approve; nay, which it may judge improbable and falſe: And if the *infallible Wiſdom of God* be a Rule *to us,* it can be ſo only in a Revelation, and then we may and muſt believe the *infallible Wiſdom of God* in a Revelation againſt the Objections of *Frail and Fallible Reaſon.*

And one may eaſily gueſs, there is ſomething amiſs ſtill, notwithſtanding all theſe conceſſions; for as *ſilly an Objection,* as he ſays, this is (which I am glad to hear), he will by no means own, that I have Anſwered it, and then I have very ill luck indeed, to make *a ſilly Objection,* which *was never made before,* and not be able to Anſwer it when I have done.

The Anſwer I give to this Objection is this, That the Matter of the Objection is not true; for we do underſtand both what it is we believe, and the reaſons why we believe it; and this I ſuppoſe may paſs for an Anſwer to that Objection: But then it is farther Objected, *That we believe ſuch things, whoſe Natures we cannot underſtand,*

and

and cannot account for by natural Reaſon: To this I Anſwer, *That Reaſon is not the judge of the Nature and Philoſophy of things, nor does it require us to believe nothing but what we thus underſtand and comprehend*: For then, as I had ſhewn, *we muſt no more believe Senſe and Reaſon, than Revelation*: And this I take to be a good Anſwer too; but then to ſhew the reaſon of this, I add: *When we make an Objection againſt any thing, that it is without Reaſon, or as we apprehend, contrary to reaſon, we muſt firſt conſider, whether it be the proper Object of Reaſon; otherwiſe it is no Objection; as it is no Objection againſt ſounds, that we cannot ſee them, nor againſt colours, that we cannot hear them; becauſe ſounds are not the object of ſight, nor colours of hearing.* This, I think, is plain Senſe, and good Reaſon too; but this he ſays is no Anſwer to that Objection, *Why ſhould reaſonable Creatures be obliged to believe things without Reaſon?* Nor was it ever intended as an immediate Anſwer to it; the Anſwer I give is, That we are not oblig'd *to believe without Reaſon*; but when ſuch Men as this Author Object farther, That *to Believe things, whoſe natures we do not underſtand, and cannot account for by natural Reaſon, is to believe without Reaſon*; it is a proper Anſwer to ſay, *That Reaſon is not judge of the Nature and Philoſophy of things, and nothing can be ſaid to be without Reaſon, or againſt Reaſon, which is not the object of Reaſon; as no man pretends, that the pure Natures and Eſſences of things, or their Eſſential Reaſons, Properties, Unions, Operations, are*; (Serm. p. 19.) But herein, it ſeems, I was miſtaken; for I have met with a Man at laſt, who makes Reaſon the judge of all this; *for if theſe be not the Objects of Reaſon, Reaſon has no Object at all; for our Reaſon can be no otherwiſe employed, but either about Subſtances, or their Unions, Eſſential Reaſons, Operations or Properties*, (p. 20.) Very right! we may know ſomething of all this; but I ſpeak of the Philoſophy of Nature:

Nature: Now can this new Philoſopher tell us, What the pure ſimple Eſſence and Subſtance of any thing is? What naked Matter ſtripp'd of all Accidents and Qualities is? How Soul and Body are United, which cannot Touch each other? How a Spirit ſhould feel Pain or Pleaſures from the Impreſſions on the Body? How we Think and Reaſon? Nay, How we See and Hear? How Thought moves our Bodies, and excites our Paſſions? And a Thouſand ſuch like Myſteries; which could he Unriddle, he would infinitely gratify the Inquiſitive world: But *Chriſtianity not Myſterious*, and the Philoſophy of pure ſimple Nature, are too great Diſcoveries for one Age; and yet if ever this happens, they muſt go together.

For as I obſerved, *this is all the incomprehenſibility men have to complain of in the Doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation:* The firſt concerns the pure Nature, Eſſence, Subſtance, of God, and the Eſſential Diſtinction and Unity of the Godhead, which we neither do, nor can know any thing of; for all Nature is a Secret and Myſtery to us, much more the Infinite Nature of God. And the ſecond concerns the Union of the Divine and Human Nature in the Perſon of Chriſt; which is a Myſtery, but what we ought not to complain of, ſince the Philoſophy of all Natural Unions is a Myſtery to us. Theſe things are not the Objects of Reaſon; and therefore though we believe them upon the Authority of a Revelation, without underſtanding the Myſtery of them, this is not to believe *without, or contrary to Reaſon.* And what now does this *Socinian* ſay to this? truly not one word, but falls out with *Socinus* and *Crellius*, and ſome of his beſt Friends, for talking ſo much of Myſteries, (which by the way ſhews, that this is not ſuch a new and unheard of Objection, as he would pretend) for now he has found out, that there is no Myſtery at all in the Doctrines of the Trinity, and Incarnation; and he is in the right, if his *Socinian* Explication of theſe Doctrines,

Doctrines, (which destroys the Mystery, and the Catholick Faith together) may pass for the Doctrine of the Church. But there has been enough said of that in *the distinction between Real and Nominal Trinitarians, examined*, which the Reader may consult, and this Author answer, at his leisure; though I am very sensible he can never want such Answers as this for any thing.

2*dly*, The Second *Objection against such a Revelation, as contains matters which natural Reason cannot comprehend, is, to what purpose such a Revelation serves? what merit there can be in believing such Doctrines? and of what good use such a Faith can be to us?* Serm. p. 20. This is another Objection, which *he thinks no Sect of Religious ever made* (p. 24.) but the *Irreligious* may make this Objection, and there are more than one Sect of these.

As to the usefulness of it, I observed, That *though neither Natural, nor Revealed Knowledge extends to the Reasons and Causes of Nature, and of Essential Properties and Operations, yet both Natural and Revealed Knowledge is of as much use to us, as if we did perfectly understand all the Secret and Incomprehensible Mysteries of the Nature of God, or of the Natures of Creatures. Both Natural and Revealed Knowledge are alike upon this account, that they only acquaint us what things are, and what ends they serve, and then we know what use to make of them, without understanding the Secret Mysteries of Nature.* This I shew'd both in the Knowledge of Nature, and of God, and added; *We may make all the use that can be made of this World, and of every thing in it, without understanding the Essential Reasons and Causes, or Internal Nature of any thing.* This last Clause he fixes his *Remarks* on; and that he may have something to remark, he changes my Words thus. *We may use the World as fully, and every thing in it to as good purpose, as if we understood the Reasons and Internal Natures of things.* And then adds, *No, Trifler; not so fully, nor to so good purpose,*

poſe, as if we better underſtood the Natures of things. Now this *fully*, and to *as good purpoſe*, are not my Words but his own; *nay we can make no uſe at all of it, but only ſo far forth as we underſtand the Nature and Reaſons of things in it. We can uſe nothing to any purpoſe, till we know or underſtand ſomething of its nature; and no farther can we apply it and uſe it, than we underſtand its Nature, and know its Properties and Powers.* Now this is not meerly *trifling*, but Knavery: He repreſents me very ridiculouſly aſſerting, That we may *as fully*, and to *as good purpoſe* uſe every thing in the World without knowing its Nature, Vertues and Properties, as if we knew them; whereas I expreſly aſſert, That we muſt firſt know, *what things are, and what ends they ſerve* (and the *better* we know this, to be ſure the better) *and then we know what uſe to make of them, without underſtanding the ſecret Myſteries of Nature.* That is, when by Experience and Obſervation, we know what things are good for, we know how to uſe them without underſtanding the ſecret Myſteries and Philoſophy of Nature: As how God created all things out of nothing; how the Corn grows, or our Food nouriſhes us, and the like: And thus I ſhew'd it was as to the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Incarnation, that how unaccountable ſoever theſe Myſteries be, it is the moſt uſeful and neceſſary Knowledge in the world.

But there is one thing ſtill behind, which I find nettles this Author; and I don't wonder at it: To ſhew how much *it became the Goodneſs of God to reveal theſe Myſteries of Salvation to us*, I obſerved, *That the lapſed ſtate of Human Nature makes Supernatural Knowledge neceſſary:*—For though *Natural Knowledge muſt be allowed ſufficient to all the ends of Human Life, while man continued Innocent*—*Yet when man had ſinned, he forfeited the Favour of God, and a natural Immortality; and whether he ſhould be reſtored or not, and by what means he ſhould be reſtored, depended wholly*

wholly on the Sovereign Will and Pleaſure of God. And therefore the Light of Nature, though it could direct an innocent man how to pleaſe and worſhip God, and to preſerve himſelf Immortal, it could not teach Sinners how to make Attonement for Sin; nor give them any certain Hopes that God would forgive Sins, and beſtow immortal Life on them: Which makes it neceſſary, that the Religion of a Sinner be a Revealed Religion. This he imperfectly tranſcribes, and adds; *True, but not in the leaſt to the purpoſe: 'Tis no Anſwer to that Objection, but to another: Namely to this; Why Revelation or a Supernatural Knowledge is neceſſary?* Here he had overſhot himſelf, in allowing *Supernatural Knowledge neceſſary*, and therefore immediately qualifies it with, *or however highly requiſite*, which declares this *Socinian*'s Opinion, That we might have been ſaved without the Knowledge of Chriſt or the Goſpel-Revelation; for I know nothing that can make any thing more neceſſary, than the neceſſity of ſalvation: And therefore if it be not *neceſſary*, but only *highly requiſite*, we might be ſaved without it: He adds the Reaſon why he ſays this is nothing to the purpoſe. *The Objection was concerning a Revelation and Faith, not intelligible, or not conceiveable; the Anſwer is only concerning Revelation (or Supernatural Knowledge) in general, Why it was given to men.* But it is neither ſo, nor ſo; the Objection concerns the uſe of ſuch a Revelation as contains matters which Natural Reaſon cannot comprehend; This part of the Anſwer proves from the lapſed ſtate of Human Nature the abſolute Neceſſity of the Goſpel Revelation, which contains theſe Myſteries. For *if Nature can't ſave us, it can't diſcover to us the way of Salvation neither; and if we muſt be ſaved by a Supernatural Grace and Power, it muſt be ſupernaturally revealed; and what is Supernatural is the Object of Faith, not of Natural Knowledge.* Serm. p. 24.

But he adds, *There is a great difference between Supernaturally revealed, and unconceivable; the whole Christian Religion, the Precepts as well as Faith of it, is a Supernatural Revelation, and yet a System so intelligible that it must be taught to the Women, to the Poor, and even to little Children.* This is true, but there is a difference between *Supernatural Knowledge*, as opposed to *Natural Knowledge*, and *Supernatural Revelation:* Such things as Nature can teach us, may be supernaturally revealed, and the degeneracy of Mankind may make this, in his Language, *highly requisite*; as the Nature and Providence of God, a future State, and the differences of Good and Evil: But *Supernatural Knowledge* is a Knowledge which Nature cannot teach, but must be learned only by Revelation; and this is the Knowledge, and a Mysterious Knowledge it is, which the lapsed state of Human Nature makes necessary, as necessary as the Salvation of Sinners by the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God: Which makes a great difference between the Precepts and Faith of the Gospel, though both contained in the same Revelation.

He adds, *It was not made the matter of Supernatural Revelation, for its Difficulty, Mysteriousness, or Transcendency of the Human Understanding, but to ascertain the Truth of it, and to enforce its Authority in the world.* Which is in plain *English* to say, That the Design of the Gospel-Revelation was not to teach us any thing beyond the Discovery or Comprehension of meer Natural Reason, but only to give greater Certainty and Authority to the Laws and Religion of Nature. And here, for a conclusion, I joyn Issue with this *Socinian* (and am glad to take the least Hint for some useful Discourse), Whether the Gospel Revelation contain any thing which Nature could not teach us, and which Natural Reason cannot comprehend; or were only intended to give greater Certainty and Authority to the Religion of Nature?

That

That the Goſpel is a New Revelation of what Nature could not teach, nor meer Natural Reaſon comprehend, I ſhall prove; not from the Name or Notion of Myſteries, which theſe men ſo fooliſhly and abſurdly ridicule; but from the expreſs Authority of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* A brief Explication of which Words will be of great uſe in our preſent Diſpute.

The ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, or Natural Man, as *Theophilact* and other *Greek* Fathers obſerve, is the man who judges only by Natural Light and Reaſon, and will receive and believe nothing beyond what Nature teaches: And the Context proves this to be the true meaning of it. This account the Apoſtle gives of the *Græcian* Philoſophers, That as *the Jews required a ſign, ſo the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom*, 1 Cor. 1. 22. nothing would content them but ſome Philoſophical Speculations, and Natural Proofs and Demonſtrations of Faith; which in this Chapter he calls, *The enticing words of man's wiſdom*, and oppoſes to the *demonſtration of the ſpirit, and of power*: that is, to the Evidence of Miracles wrought by the Spirit of God; which are a more certain and infallible Proof than all their Pretences to Reaſon and Demonſtration: For *where is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world? hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world? for after that in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom* (by natural Reaſon and Philoſophy) *knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*, 1 Cor. 1. 20, 21. Theſe are the men who rejected the Faith of Chriſt, of whom the Apoſtle here ſpeaks, and gives an account of the reaſon of their Infidelity in theſe words, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God.*

Which will more fully appear, by examining what *theſe things of the Spirit of God are:* And it is evident from the whole Context, that they are matters of pure Revelation, which can be known only by the Revelation of the Spirit, or the whole Oeconomy of our Salvation, by the Incarnation, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, of Jeſus Chriſt, the Eternal Son of God, which is the Subject of the Goſpel-Revelation. This he calls, *The Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery, even the hidden Wiſdom, which God ordained before the world to our glory*, ver. 7. and what this is, immediately follows; *Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*; which can refer only to the Diſpenſation of Grace by Jeſus Chriſt. This Nature could not teach us, *as it is written, Eye hath not ſeen, neither ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, v. 9. That is, ſuch things as neither Senſe, nor Natural Reaſon could inform us of: *But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, even the deep things of God; for what man knoweth the things of a man, but the Spirit of a man which is in him? even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the ſpirit of God: Now we have received not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know thoſe things which are freely given us of God:* Which proves that theſe are properly the things of the Spirit, which could never be known but by the Revelation of the Spirit: For they *are the deep things of God*, his Secret Counſels and Purpoſes for the Redemption of Mankind; the free Reſults of his own Wiſdom and Goodneſs, *the things which are freely given us of God*; and therefore can be known, and can be revealed only by the Spirit; and theſe are *the things of the Spirit*, which *the natural Man*, the vain Pretender to Reaſon and Philoſophy, *receiveth not*. Now can any man deſire a plainer Proof than this, how incompetent a Judge

Judge meer natural Reaſon is of the Myſteries of Faith, of the whole Oeconomy of Goſpel-Grace? For what the natural Man does not receive, that meer natural Reaſon does not receive; for the only Reaſon why the natural Man does not receive it, is becauſe natural Reaſon does not receive it; and what is *fooliſhneſs* to the natural Man, is fooliſhneſs to natural Reaſon; and what the natural Man cannot know, becauſe they are *ſpiritually diſcerned*, that natural Reaſon cannot diſcern.

Now can there be a plainer Proof than this (if we believe St. *Paul*) that there are ſuch Doctrines contained in the Goſpel, as natural Reaſon does not receive, or approve, but rejects with ſcorn: For it is not ſaid, That the natural Man cannot by the mere Light of Nature find out, or diſcover theſe things of the Spirit; that he had aſſerted before, but theſe words give a reaſon of the Infidelity of the Wiſe Men, the *Scribes*, the Diſputers of this World, who rejected the Faith when it was preached to them by the Apoſtles; that the natural Man, ὁ δέχεται, does not receive or approve the Faith; and not only ſo, but rejects it as *fooliſhneſs*, as abſurd, contradictious, impoſſible, unworthy of a Man of Reaſon, and Philoſophy. Like *the Philoſophers of the* Epicureans, *and the* Stoicks, *who encountred St.* Paul, when he preached at *Athens*; *and ſome ſaid, What will this babler ſay; other ſome, He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods, becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus and the reſurrection.* 17. Acts 18.

If then there be ſuch Doctrines as theſe in the Goſpel-Revelation, it is certain, it can be no Objection againſt any Article of the Chriſtian Faith, that meer natural Reaſon does not receive, approve, comprehend it, but accounts it abſurd, ridiculous, fooliſh; for thus the things of the Spirit of God were to the natural Man in St. *Paul*'s days, and thus they will always be. Nay if the things of the Spirit of God are ſo far above the comprehenſion of Human

man Reaſon, then ſuch Doctrines as meer natural Reaſon does not receive, have this Mark and Character of Divinity, if they are contained in the Goſpel-Revelation: Nay, let me add farther, That thoſe Doctrines which have been always owned and defended with the warmeſt Zeal by the Catholick Church, and oppoſed and rejected with as great ſcorn and contempt by Pagans, Infidels, and Hereticks, as a contradiction to the Reaſon of Mankind, and the Philoſophy of Nature, are moſt likely to be the true Chriſtian Faith; for this proves that the Chriſtian Church always believed them to be Goſpel-Doctrines; and Infidels and Hereticks rejected them as incomprehenſible, and inconceiveable, and abſurd to Human Reaſon; and ſuch the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Incarnation, and Croſs of Chriſt, have always been to ſuch natural Men.

Nay, farther: If there be ſuch Doctrines in the Goſpel-Revelation, which meer Natural Reaſon receiveth not, but accounts fooliſhneſs; then it is certain, that is not the true Chriſtian Faith which contains none of theſe Myſteries, none of this *hidden Wiſdom*, none of *theſe deep things of God.* Let the *Socinian* then tell us, What things there are in their Faith, which the Natural Man receiveth not, which are above the comprehenſion of meer Natural Reaſon: They glory that they have no ſuch incomprehenſible Myſteries in their Faith; that they have *a reaſonable Faith*, that they have ſtript Chriſtian Religion of Riddles and Myſteries, and fitted it to the level and comprehenſion of Human Reaſon; but this very thing wherein they glory, is a demonſtration againſt them, that *Socinianiſm* is not the true Chriſtian Faith; for that contains ſuch Doctrines, as the Natural Man and meer Natural Reaſon receiveth not.

They commonly laugh at that diſtinction between things *contrary to Reaſon*, and *above Reaſon*, which Human Reaſon is no judge of. We aſſert, That a Divine Revela-

Revelation can never contradict true Reaſon; for a Divine Revelation muſt be true, and true Reaſon is true, and Truth cannot contradict Truth: But we aſſert, that there are many things in the Chriſtian Faith which are *above Reaſon*; which Reaſon is not a competent judge of, and which Natural Men may call contradictions, if every thing muſt paſs for a contradiction to Reaſon, which meer Natural Reaſon does not receive, approve, allow. But after all, they muſt find ſomething above Natural Reaſon, if they will believe like Chriſtians; for ſuch things there are in the Chriſtian Faith, and then let them diſtinguiſh as they can between *contrary to Reaſon*, and *above it*.

But I muſt take notice of one thing more in theſe words, the reaſon why *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, and *cannot know them*, viz. *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, πνευματικῶς, they are to be known and judged of only by Spiritual Arguments and Methods; and therefore the Natural Man, who rejects all means of Knowledge but Natural Reaſon, can never know them. The Truth and Certainty of our Faith muſt be learnt, not from the Evidence of Natural Reaſon and Philoſophy, which was the Evidence the Philoſophers expected. *The Greeks ſeek after Wiſdom*, 1 Cor. 1. 22. But St. *Paul* tells us, *That Chriſt ſent him to preach the Goſpel, not with Wiſdom of words, leſt the Croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect.* v. 17. & c. 2. 4, 5. *And my Speech and my Preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom; but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power.* I did not confirm my Doctrine by Natural Reaſons and Arguments; but by the Evidence of Miracles wrought by the Power of the Holy Spirit; *That your Faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.* And the true Interpretation, and admirable Wiſdom of theſe Divine Myſteries, muſt be *ſpiritually*

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ritually diſcerned alſo. Which things alſo we ſpeak not in the words which man's Wiſdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual. There is a ſpiritual Language belongs to ſpiritual Things; and we muſt learn the true Senſe and Interpretation of the Faith, not from Natural Ideas, or the Words and Notions of Philoſophy, that is, in the *Socinian* Language, by Expounding Scripture by Natural Reaſon; but by ſtudying the Language of Scripture, and the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt in it, eſpecially by comparing the Old and the New Teſtament together; *Spiritual things with Spiritual:* This is a way of Learning which Natural Men deſpiſe, and therefore cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, which muſt be ſpiritually diſcerned. All this I think abundantly proves that there are ſuch Myſteries in the Chriſtian Faith, as meer Natural Reaſon cannot diſcover, cannot prove, cannot receive and comprehend, cannot interpret; which ſhews what reaſon we have to diſtinguiſh betwen matters of pure Faith and Philoſophy; and what danger there is of corrupting the Faith by Philoſophy.

And now I think I may conclude; for I ſuppoſe no body will expect, that I ſhould defend my ſelf againſt his ridiculous Charge, That I am a *Socinian*; which had he believed, I ſhould have found better treatment from him: But I ſhall leave him to rave by himſelf, and look upon all theſe Hurricanes of Fury and Vengeance, as a good ſign that they feel themſelves mortally Wounded.

THE END.

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